



**SPEECH OF ADMIRAL MARK FITZGERALD,
COMMANDER, U.S. NAVAL FORCES EUROPE
COMMANDER, ALLIED JOINT FORCE COMMAND NAPLES**

DEDICATION AND AWARD CEREMONY
ILLINDEN BARRACKS SKOPJE
SEPTEMBER 17, 2008

GOOD MORNING. THANK YOU FOR THE WARM WELCOME.

MR. ZORAN KONJANOVSKI, MINISTER OF DEFENSE, LIEUTENANT GENERAL MIROSLAV STOJANOVSKI, CHIEF OF DEFENSE, MR. THOMAS NAVRATIL, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, HONORED GUESTS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

I'M THRILLED TO BE HERE IN THE BEAUTIFUL CITY OF SKOPJE, RICH IN HISTORY, RENOWNED FOR ITS ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL TREASURES, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, A CITY DEFINED BY ITS DIVERSITY. A TRUE NEXUS POINT IN THE WORLD. IT IS NOT OFTEN ENOUGH THAT I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE IN THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR FELLOW SOLDIERS AND SAILORS. WITHOUT YOUR EFFORTS, NOTHING WE DO IS OF ANY IMPORTANCE, SO I AM HONORED TO HAVE BEEN PART OF THIS SPECIAL DAY.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION, YOUR TREMENDOUS PROFESSIONALISM, AND YOUR SUPPORT TO HELP MAINTAIN PEACE AND SECURITY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD IS NOTHING SHORT OF HEROIC, AND FOR THAT I THANK YOU ALL FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE. ONLY THROUGH THIS SPIRIT OF PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE THAT OUR COLLECTIVE SECURITY BE BEST SERVED.

TODAY, WE ARE CONTINUING TO BUILD UPON THIS SPIRIT OF PARTNERSHIP BY DEDICATING A 75' RAPPEL TOWER AND SHOOT HOUSE. YOUR EFFORTS HAVE ALREADY PROVEN THAT WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS, IT IS POSSIBLE TO TRAIN OUR PEOPLE WITH GREAT SUCCESS. THREE DAYS FROM NOW, THESE TOOLS WILL BE PUT TO IMMEDIATE USE AS PART OF THE ADRIATIC TRAINING EXERCISE, SUCCESSFULLY TRAINING TOMORROW'S MILITARY PROFESSIONALS.

IN CLOSING, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK GEN STOJANOVSKI FOR YOUR FORCES. I LOOK FORWARD TO OUR CONTINUED COOPERATION.

THANK YOU.